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On page 8, line 7, after "radicals", insert -- and in which R², R³ and R⁴ are alkyl radicals.

On page 8, delete lines 8 and 9.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend claims 1-3, 7-9, 11, 12, 14, 16-18 and 20 as follows:

1. (Amended) A process for the preparation of a heat-stable antimony-free polyester of neutral color comprising the [by] esterification of an aromatic dicarboxylic acid or transesterification of a lower aliphatic ester of an aromatic dicarboxylic acid with an aliphatic diol in the presence of 20 to 120 ppm of a transesterification metal catalyst, which is added in the form of a metal compound, and subsequent polycondensation, [which comprises a procedure in which a possible transesterification is carried out in the presence of 20 to 120 ppm, based on the catalyst metal, of a transesterification catalyst, then] wherein after the esterification or transesterification has ended, a complexing agent selected from the group consisting of phosphoric acid, phosphorous acid, [and/or a] phosphonic acid and derivatives thereof *the esters of such acids* is [or a derivative thereof are] added to the esterification or transesterification batch [as a complexing agent] in an amount which is 100% of the amount equivalent to the transesterification catalyst employed and up to 99% of the amount equivalent to [the] cobalt to be employed, and wherein up to 80 ppm of cobalt

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cont.

in the form of a cobalt compound is [are] added to the batch, and the polycondensation is carried out without the addition of antimony, in the presence of 1 to 10 ppm of titanium, which is added in the form of a titanium compound, and if appropriate in the presence of up to 1000 ppm of organic compounds which donate crosslinking structural groups (pentaerythritol) and if appropriate up to 50 ppm of an optical brightener].

2. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein, [after the esterification or transesterification has ended, phosphoric acid, phosphorous acid and/or a phosphonic acid or a derivative thereof is added as] the complexing agent is added to the esterification or transesterification batch in an amount of 100% of the amount equivalent to the transesterification catalyst employed and 90 to 99% of the amount equivalent to the cobalt to be employed.

3. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein a melt is formed during the polycondensation which is carried out [without the addition of antimony] in the presence of 1 to 10 ppm of titanium up to an intrinsic viscosity [IV], measured in dichloroacetic acid at 25°C, of 0.4 to 0.9 dl/g and up to a carboxyl group concentration of 10 to 50 mmol/kg in the melt, and then wherein the polycondensation is continued up to the desired end viscosity in the solid phase.

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5. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polycondensation is carried out [without addition of antimony] in the presence of 2-8 ppm of

Q2
titanium [and if appropriate in the presence of up to 1000 ppm of organic compounds which donate crosslinking structural groups].

In claim 7, ✓ page 28, lines 6 and 7, delete "without addition of antimony".

B 8. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim ^{a7} 7 ~~comprising the [by] esterification of an aromatic dicarboxylic acid or hydroxycarboxylic acid or transesterification of a lower aliphatic ester of an aromatic dicarboxylic acid or hydroxycarboxylic acid with an aliphatic diol and subsequent polycondensation~~, wherein 80 to 100 mol% of an aromatic dicarboxylic acid of the formula III



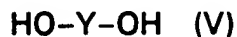
or a lower aliphatic ester thereof and

0 to 20 mol% of an aromatic hydroxycarboxylic acid of the formula IV



or a lower aliphatic ester thereof,

are esterified or transesterified with a diol of the formula V



in which

Q3
X is, based on the total amount of di- and hydroxycarboxylic acids, more than 80 mol% of aromatic radicals having 5 to 16[, preferably 6 to 12] carbon atoms [to the extent of more than 80 mol%,] and not more than 20 mol% of aliphatic radicals having 4 to 10 carbon atoms[, preferably 6 to 8 carbon atoms],

X¹ is a [the] p-phenylene radical,

Y is, based on the total amount of transesterified or esterified diols, at least 80 mol% of alkylene or polymethylene groups having 2 to 4 carbon atoms or cycloalkane or dimethylene-cycloalkane groups having 6 to 10 carbon atoms [to the extent of at least 80 mol%] and not more than 20 mol% of straight-chain or branched alkanediyl having 4 to 16[, preferably 4 to 8,] carbon atoms or radicals of the formula $-(C_2H_4-O)_n-C_2H_4-$, in which n is an integer from 1 to 40[, to the extent of not more than 20 mol%, where n is preferably 1 or 2 for contents up to 20 mol%, and groups where n = 10 to 40 are preferably present only in contents of less than 5 mol%].

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CONT.
9. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 8, wherein X is, based on the total amount of di- and hydroxycarboxylic acids, 90 to 100 mol% of p-phenylene radicals [to the extent of 90 to 100 mol%], 0 to 7 mol% of m-phenylene radicals [to the extent of 0 to 7 mol%] and 0 to 5 mol% of aliphatic radicals having 4 to 10 carbon atoms[, preferably 6 to 8 carbon atoms, to the extent of 0 to 5 mol%],

X¹ is the p-phenylene radical,

Y is, based on the total amount of transesterified or esterified diols, at least 90 mol% of alkylene or polymethylene groups having 2 to 4 carbon atoms or cycloalkane or dimethylene-cycloalkane groups having 6 to 10 carbon atoms [to the extent of at least 90 mol%] and not more than 10 mol% of straight-chain or branched alkanediyl having 4 to 16[, preferably 4 to 8,] carbon atoms

or radicals of the formula $-(C_2H_4-O)_n-C_2H_4-$, in which n is the number 1 or 2[, to the extent of not more than 10 mol%].

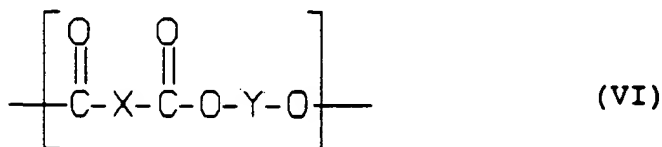
11. (Amended) A heat-stable, antimony-free polyester of neutral color based on an aromatic dicarboxylic acid and an aliphatic diol as claimed in claim 10, which [is free from antimony, and] comprises 1 to 10 ppm of titanium, 20 to 120 ppm of a transesterification catalyst metal in the form of catalytically inactive complexes with a complexing agent selected from the group consisting of phosphoric acid, phosphorous acid, [and/or a] phosphonic acid and derivatives [or a derivative] thereof, and 0 to 80 ppm of cobalt, which is partly present in the form of catalytically inactive complexes with a complexing agent selected from the group consisting of phosphoric acid, phosphorous acid, [and/or a] phosphonic acid and derivatives [or a derivative] thereof[, and optionally up to 50 ppm of an optical brightener].

12. (Amended) A heat-stable, antimony-free polyester of neutral color as claimed in claim 10, which [is free from antimony and] comprises 2 to 8 ppm of titanium, 50 to 90 ppm of manganese [(calculated as the metal)] in the form of catalytically inactive complexes with a complexing agent selected from the group consisting of phosphoric acid, phosphorous acid, [and/or a] phosphonic acid and derivatives [or a derivative] thereof, and 20 to 40 ppm of cobalt, which is partly present in the form of catalytically inactive complexes with a complexing agent selected from the group consisting of phosphoric acid,

phosphorous acid, [and/or a] phosphonic acid and derivatives [or a derivative] thereof[, and optionally up to 25 ppm of an optical brightener].

14. (Amended) A heat-stable, antimony-free polyester of neutral color as claimed in claim 10, in which 90 to 99% of the cobalt is in the form of one or more catalytically inactive complexes with a complexing agent selected from the group consisting of phosphoric acid, phosphorous acid, [and/or a] phosphonic acid and derivatives [or a derivative] thereof. the esters of such acids

16. (Amended) A heat-stable, antimony-free polyester of neutral color as claimed in claim ²⁸ 10, wherein its polymer chains comprise [are built up from] 80 to 100 mol% of structural groups of the formula VI



and 20 to 0 mol% of structural groups of the formula VII



in which

X is more than 80 mol% of aromatic radicals having 5 to 16[, preferably 6 to 12] carbon atoms [to the extent of more than 80 mol%] and not more than 20

mol% of aliphatic radicals having 4 to 10 carbon atoms[, preferably 6 to 8 carbon atoms],

X¹ is the p-phenylene radical,

Y is at least 80 mol% of alkylene or polymethylene groups having 2 to 4 carbon atoms or cycloalkane or dimethylene-cycloalkane groups having 6 to 10 carbon atoms [to the extent of at least 80 mol%] and not more than 20 mol% of straight-chain or branched alkanediyl having 4 to 16[, preferably 4 to 8] carbon atoms or radicals of the formula $-(C_2H_4-O)_n-C_2H_4-$, in which n is an integer from 1 to 40[, to the extent of not more than 20 mol%, where n is preferably 1 or 2 for contents up to 20 mol% and groups where n = 10 to 40 are preferably present only in contents of less than 5 mol%].

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cont

17. (Amended) A heat-stable, antimony-free polyester of neutral color as claimed in claim 16, which is comprised [consists] of structural groups of the formula IV in which X is 90 to 100 mol% of p-phenylene radicals [to the extent of 90 to 100 mol%], 0 to 7 mol% of m-phenylene radicals [to the extent of 0 to 7 mol%] and 0 to 5 mol% of aliphatic radicals having 4 to 10 carbon atoms[, preferably 6 to 8 carbon atoms, to the extent of 0 to 5 mol%],
- Y is at least 90 mol% of alkylene or polymethylene groups having 2 to 4 carbon atoms or cycloalkane or dimethylene-cycloalkane groups having 6 to 10 carbon atoms [to the extent of at least 90 mol%] and not more than 10 mol% of straight-chain or branched alkanediyl having 4 to 16[, preferably 4 to 8] carbon atoms or radicals of the formula $-(C_2H_4-O)_n-C_2H_4-$, in which n is the number 1 or 2[, to the extent of not more than 10 mol%].

- 06 CONT
18. (Amended) A heat-stable, antimony-free polyester of neutral color as claimed in claim 16, which is comprised [composed] of structural groups of the formula IV in which X is 93 to 99 mol% of p-phenylene radicals [to the extent of 93 to 99 mol%] and 1 to 7 mol% of m-phenylene radicals [to the extent of 1 to 7 mol%].
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In claim 20, page 33, line 31, delete "optionally" and insert therefor -- further --.

Add new claims 21-26:

21. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the transesterification catalyst is manganese in the form of a manganese compound.

- 07 B P
22. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polycondensation is carried out in the presence of up to 1000 ppm of organic ~~compounds which donate~~ crosslinking agents crosslinking structural groups.

23. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polycondensation is carried out in the presence of up to 50 ppm of an optical brightener.

24. The process as claimed in claim 3, wherein the end viscosity of the heat-stable antimony-free polyester is 0.7 to 2.0 dl/g, measured in dichloroacetic acid at 25 C.